

Wisconsin Forest Landowner Grant Program

WI Council on Forestry Meeting

March 3, 2026

Kristin Lambert



Public & Private Forestry

PUBLIC LANDS

County Forest

State Forest

Nat'l Forest
(Timber)

Nat'l Forest
(Restoration)

Public Forestry
LTE

CERTIFICATION

PRIVATE LANDS

Private
Forestry

Private
Forestry &
Easements

Private
Forestry LTE

Private
Forestry

26.38 Forest grant program.

(1) In this section:

- (a) “Community” has the meaning given in s. 28.04 (1) (b).
- (ag) “Forest stewardship management plan” means a plan describing forest stewardship measures to be used on a particular site to achieve multiple natural resource goals.
- (ar) “Nonindustrial private forest land” means rural land that has existing tree cover or that is suitable for growing trees.
- (b) “Sustainable forestry” has the meaning given in s. 28.04 (1) (e).

(2m)

- (a) The department shall establish a program to award grants for developing and implementing forest stewardship management plans by owners of nonindustrial private forest land and to award grants to groups of interested parties for projects to control invasive plants in weed management areas. The department shall award the grants only to persons owning 500 acres or less of nonindustrial private forest land in this state or to groups in which each person participating owns 500 acres or less of nonindustrial private forest land in this state.
- (am) Beginning with fiscal year 2008-09, from the appropriation under s. 20.370 (5) (av), the department shall allocate for each fiscal year at least \$60,000 for grants for projects to control invasive plants in weed management areas. From the amount allocated, the department shall award grants to all eligible applicants for grants for such projects before awarding any balance of the allocated amount for grants for stewardship management plans.
- (b) Each recipient of a grant under this section shall provide a matching contribution in an amount to be determined by the department for that particular grant based on criteria promulgated by rule under sub. (3). The matching contribution may be in the form of money or in-kind goods or services or both.
- (c) A forest stewardship management plan developed or implemented with a grant under this section shall meet minimum standards that are promulgated by rule under sub. (3) and shall contain practices that protect and enhance all of the following:
 1. Soil and water quality.
 2. Endangered, threatened or rare forest communities.
 - 3m. Sustainable forestry.
 4. Habitat for fish and wildlife.
 5. The recreational, aesthetic and environmental benefits that the forest land provides.

(3) The department shall promulgate rules to implement and administer this program, including all of the following:

- (a) The criteria for determining the amount of a matching contribution under sub. (2m) (b).
- (b) The minimum standards required under sub. (2m) (c).
- (c) Eligibility requirements for groups receiving grants for weed management areas, requirements for the grants, and requirements for establishing weed management areas.

History: 1997 a. 27; 2007 a. 20.

Cross-reference: See also ch. NR 47, Wis. adm. code.

Chapter NR 47

FORESTRY GRANT AND STATE AID ADMINISTRATION

Subchapter I — General Provisions

- NR 47.001 Purpose.
- NR 47.002 Definitions.
- NR 47.003 Forest stewardship coordinating committee.
- NR 47.004 Project reports.
- NR 47.005 Grantee accountability.
- NR 47.006 Grant variances.
- NR 47.007 Grant termination.
- NR 47.008 Enforcement.

Subchapter II — Forest Stewardship Grant Program

- NR 47.01 Purpose.
- NR 47.02 Applicability.
- NR 47.03 Application procedures.
- NR 47.04 Grant calculation.
- NR 47.05 Eligible applicants.
- NR 47.06 Eligible projects; preference.
- NR 47.07 Eligible and ineligible costs.
- NR 47.08 Grant awards; payment.

Subchapter III — Stewardship Incentives Program

- NR 47.10 Purpose and scope.
- NR 47.11 Applicability.
- NR 47.12 Definitions.
- NR 47.13 State program administration.
- NR 47.14 Eligible applicants.
- NR 47.15 Eligible practices.
- NR 47.16 Eligible costs.
- NR 47.17 Ineligible costs.
- NR 47.18 Grant calculation.
- NR 47.19 Grant selection system.

- NR 47.75 Sustainable forestry grant for county forests.

Subchapter VII — The Private Forest Landowner Grant Program

- NR 47.80 Purpose and scope.
- NR 47.81 Applicability.
- NR 47.82 Definitions.
- NR 47.83 Program administration.
- NR 47.84 Eligibility.
- NR 47.85 Costs.
- NR 47.86 Grants.
- NR 47.87 Payment to landowners.
- NR 47.88 Reconsideration.
- NR 47.89 Enforcement.
- NR 47.895 Funding.

Subchapter VIII — Forest Fire Protection Grant Program

- NR 47.90 Purpose.
- NR 47.901 Applicability.
- NR 47.902 Definitions.
- NR 47.903 Application procedures.
- NR 47.904 Grant calculation.
- NR 47.905 Eligibility.
- NR 47.906 Eligible and ineligible costs.
- NR 47.907 Grant selection process.
- NR 47.908 Grant awards; payment.

Subchapter IX — Rules for Federal Cost Sharing Program to Suppress Gypsy Moth

- NR 47.910 Purpose.
- NR 47.911 Applicability.
- NR 47.912 Definitions.
- NR 47.913 Eligibility.

WFLGP Purpose

To encourage private forest landowners to manage their lands in a manner that benefits the state's forest and related resources and the people of the state.

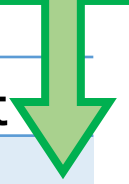


WFLGP Funding

- Funded via Forestry SEG account of the Conservation Fund
 - Grants/aids (= all funds go to grantees)
- Biennial appropriation of \$2.3 million
 - \$120,000 to Weed Management Area grants
- =\$1,133,000 annually

Biennium	Biennial Amount
2025-27	\$2,386,000
2023-25	\$2,295,800
2021-23	\$2,295,800
2019-21	\$2,295,800
2017-19	\$2,295,800
2015-17	\$2,295,800
2013-15	\$2,295,800
2011-13	\$2,295,800
2009-11	\$2,295,800
2007-09	\$3,360,000
2005-07	\$2,500,000
2003-05	\$2,500,000

\$90,200
increase!





WFLGP Basics

- Cost-share (financial incentive) program
 - Landowners pay full cost; reimbursed up to 50%
- Landowners must have a Forest Stewardship Plan
- Non-industrial private forest (NIPF) landowners owning 10-500 acres
- \$10,000 max grant

Eligible Practices

- **Priority 1**
 - Forest Stewardship Plan development
 - Reforestation and afforestation
 - Forest health and improvement
 - Soil and water protection and improvement
- **Priority 2**
 - Wetland and riparian protection
 - Wildlife habitat enhancement
 - Endangered/threatened resources, rare natural community, historic/cultural/archaeological protection, restoration, enhancement or maintenance



Notice: Persons applying for Private Forest Landowner Grant Funds, as provided in s. 26.38, Wis. Stats., must provide complete information requested on this application. Personal information collected will be used for administrative purposes and may be made available to requesters to the extent required by Wisconsin's Public Records Law (ss. 19.31-19.39, Wis. Stats.).

* Grants will be awarded February 1, May 1, August 1 and November 1, provided funding is available.

CHECK HERE IF LANDOWNER IS REQUESTING EMERGENCY FUNDING DESIGNATED BY THE CHIEF STATE FORESTER

Instructions

Page 1: To be filled out and signed by the **Landowner Applicant**. Submit this application with the W-9 to the DNR forester assigned to the county where the property is located. Do not send materials to the Madison office.

Page 2: To be filled out and signed by the **DNR Forester** assigned to the county where the property is located. The DNR forester will submit application materials to the WFLGP Grant Manager.

W-9 Form: To be filled out and signed by the **Landowner Applicant**. Submit the W-9 form with this application to the DNR forester. This form is used for tax purposes. The name and address on the application and the W-9 form must be identical.

For DNR Central Office Use Grant Number
Supplier ID

Landowner Applicant

Last Name	First Name	MI	Email
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Business Name (As used on W-9 for tax purposes)

Address	Phone Number (include area code)
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City	State	ZIP Code	FAX Number (include area code)
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Property Information - Location where practice(s) will be completed

County	<input type="radio"/> Village <input type="radio"/> City <input type="radio"/> Town	Total Forest Stewardship Plan Acreage of
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Township	Range	Section	1/4	1/4	1/4	Gov't Lot #	Section	1/4	1/4	1/4	Gov't Lot #	Section	1/4	1/4	1/4	Gov't Lot #
N	<input type="radio"/> E <input type="radio"/> W															

Have you previously received a **WFLGP** Grant? Yes No

Are you also applying for grants from other governmental programs (e.g. EQIP, CSP, etc.)? Yes No

Are you a legal entity principally engaged in the production of wood products or a corporation whose stocks are publicly traded?
 Yes No

Please consult the DNR forester assigned to the county where your property is located and discuss which practice(s) would benefit your property. The practice(s) must be completed within 24 months after the date of your grant award letter sent from the DNR. The practice(s) must be maintained for a minimum of 10 years from the start date of your grant award.

Please note: Landowners cannot apply for other management practices until there is a Forest Stewardship Plan in place on the property.

Applicant Certification

I certify that I own at least 10 acres of contiguous forest and not more than 500 acres of forest land within the State of Wisconsin. I certify that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, information provided on this form is true, accurate, and complete. I further understand and agree that any grant funds subsequently awarded because of this application shall be used in accordance with s. 26.38, Wis. Stats., and ch. NR 47, subchs. I and VII, Wis. Adm. Code.

Please sign or type your name in the signature line. If electronically signing this form, you agree to be legally bound to the same extent as a traditional handwritten signature on a paper document submitted to satisfy the same requirement.

Applicant Signature	Date
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- Important:**
1. A completed and signed W-9 form must be attached.
 2. Page 2 must be completed and signed by the approving DNR forester.
 3. Successful applicants will receive an award letter from the DNR indicating that work may begin. Costs incurred prior to the award letter date are not eligible.



Role of Community Financial Assistance

- Bureau of Community Financial Assistance (Division of External Services) facilitates WFLGP along with other Department grant programs in partnership with the Division of Forestry

Dear Landowner:

Congratulations! On behalf of the Governor, I am pleased to announce that your WFL application for cost sharing is now approved. Before beginning work on your grant project, please contact your DNR Forester, Travis Larson, (715)340-1724, Travis.Larson@wisconsin.gov.

You have been awarded \$6690 for approved practice(s). To be eligible for reimbursement, your project must begin on or after May 1, 2022, and be completed by May 1, 2024. A worksheet to help with record keeping is included. Please keep all your original receipts and worksheets and submit copies to your DNR Forester upon completion of your project.

Once your DNR Forester certifies that your practice(s) are complete, you will be eligible to receive reimbursement. According to your application, checks will be made out to ZAHN, ROBERT, L.. Please notify your DNR Forester as soon as possible if this is incorrect or of any address changes.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS:

- *Should you decide you are no longer interested in receiving this grant, contact your DNR forester immediately.*
- *All WFL grant recipients must maintain records that document time and proof of payment for up to three years after the grant is complete. This includes receipts, paid invoices, canceled checks, work logs, approval letters, etc. *Note: Even in cases where a third party performs the work (e.g., custom tree planter, consulting forester etc.) it is still the grant recipient's responsibility to retain and supply all necessary documentation.*
- *Grant recipients must adhere to rules and guidelines for the program (see NR 47, Wis. Adm. Code). One requirement is that practices, including planting trees, must be maintained for a minimum of 10 years. This may include maintaining a minimum number of trees per acre.*
- *The DNR Forester must approve any change(s) to the practice specification prior to starting any work.*
- *The DNR is required to report the grant payment you received to the Internal Revenue Service as income using the information provided on your W-9 form. The taxability of this income may vary depending on your situation. Consult with a tax professional for more information on this topic.*

The DNR takes seriously its responsibility to protect all confidential data collected, including W-9 information. Before proofs of payment are sent to the DNR, please protect confidential data by blackening out bank account numbers, credit card account numbers, and other confidential account information. Please do not cross out check numbers if you are using a bank statement as proof of payment.

Key Point:
Landowners cannot begin their project until they receive their award letter

Any expenses incurred prior are not eligible for reimbursement

Application Wait Times

17 month waiting period!

Last grant batch of FY – use up balance of FY funds

FY starts

2nd grant batch – often no grants awarded

January February March April May June July August September October November December

Hit capacity for Aug 1 awards

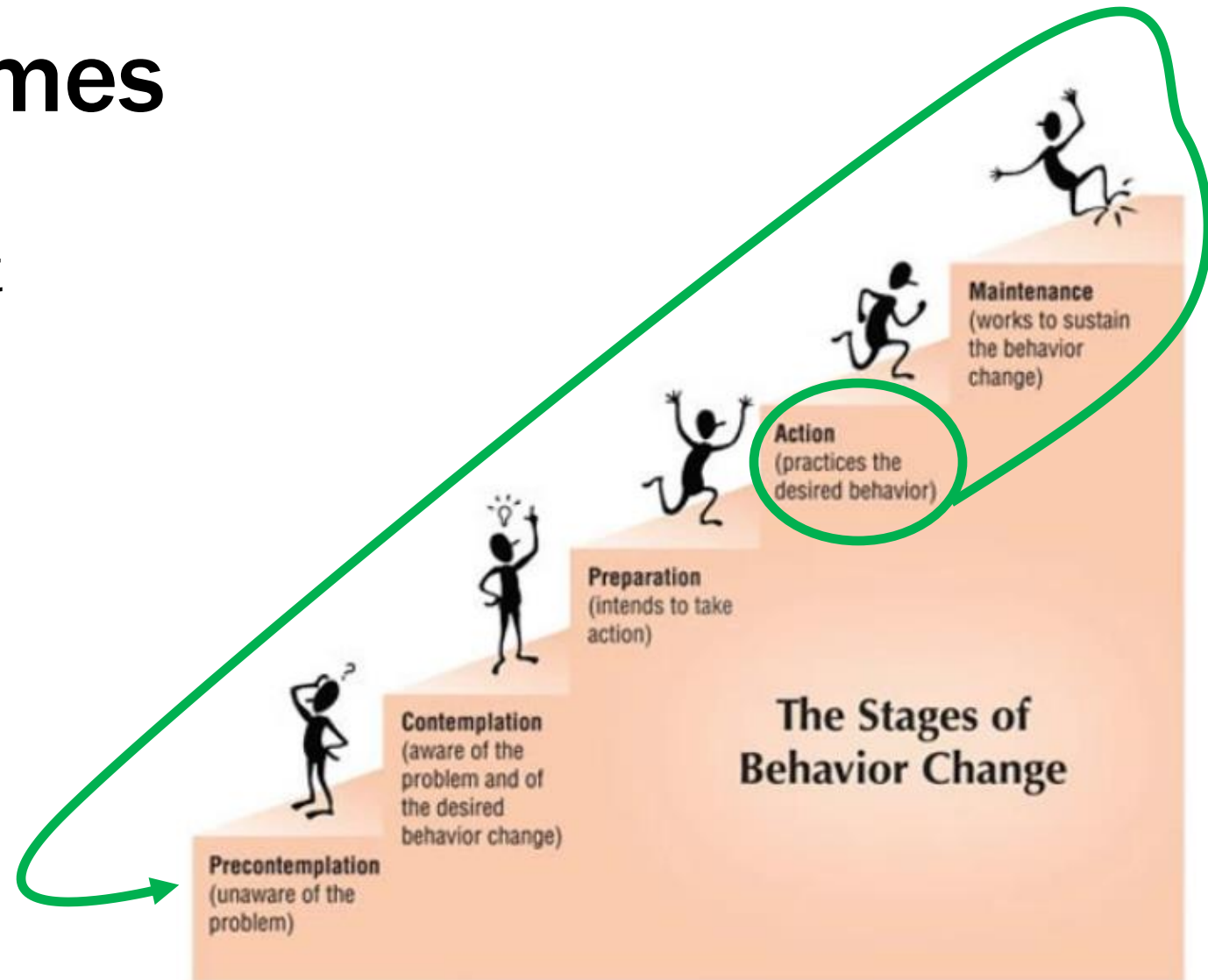
3rd grant batch – often no grants awarded

1st grant batch – most of FY

EX: Aug 1 2021
Awarded 381 grants totaling \$975K
Still 127 applications on wait list, totaling over \$300K

Impacts of Wait Times

- Landowners lose excitement and momentum for their project
- May even withdraw their application



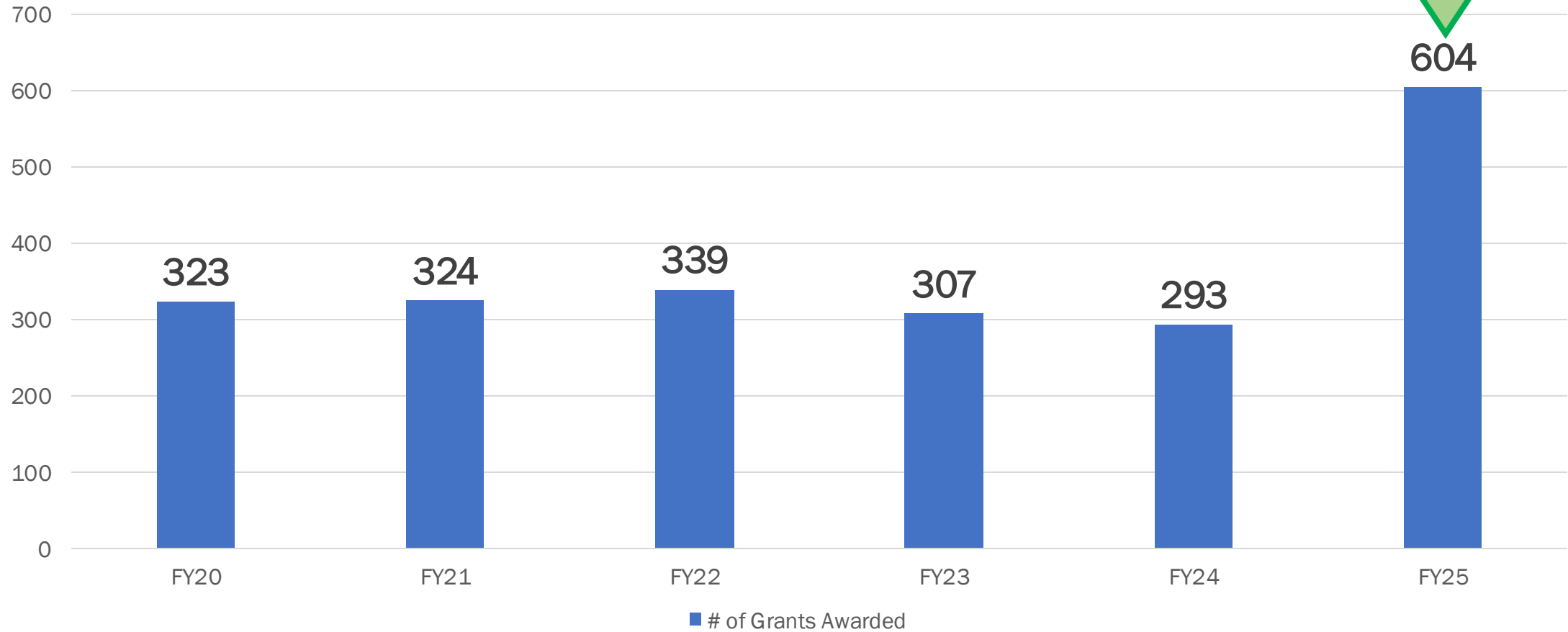
Sources: Grimley 1997 (75) and Prochaska 1992 (148)

Wisconsin Forest Landowner Grant Program

Number of practices and dollars encumbered by practice for fiscal years 2023 and 2024. Dollars are based on the estimated cost of reimbursement (50% of practice cost) upon application approval. These are not actual amounts paid out to landowners.

Practice	Fiscal Year 2023		Fiscal Year 2024	
	Grants Awarded (#)	Dollars (\$)	Grants Awarded (#)	Dollars (\$)
Undesirable species control	279	632,282	241	654,767
Stewardship plans and revisions	112	59,076	80	40,689
Site preparation	137	147,723	108	139,336
Tree plantings	137	217,878	97	166,875
Crop tree release	30	32,596	28	38,557
Seedling protection	26	29,218	5	2,700
Exclusion fencing	10	26,794	11	17,260
Erosion control	11	5,014	11	3,484
Pruning	7	2,650	6	2,800
Direct seeding	5	2,125	1	70
Total	754	1,155,356	588	1,066,538

Grants Awarded Per Fiscal Year



Positive Impact of Federal Grant!

- Forest Landowner Support Grant (IRA)
- \$3,088,000 for five years
 - ~additional \$1 million each FY for 3 FYs
 - plus some admin \$
- Eliminated wait list!
- Max wait time → 2 months (vs ~17 months)
- All of this still with virtually no marketing!



During Grant Period

- Landowner must keep records of expenses incurred
 - Receipts
 - Paid invoices
 - Cancelled checks
 - Work logs for in-kind/volunteer labor
- Why?
 - **Actual reimbursement is based on actual expenses incurred**, not the estimate provided on the WFLGP application



Landowner Reimbursement

- Landowner submits payment request to DNR Forester
- Forester reviews
- A check is sent to the landowner for their reimbursement

CONNECT WITH US

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Section Chief

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@WI_DNR



/WIDNRTV



"WILD WISCONSIN:
OFF THE RECORD"